

Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center

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Situation Report for July 25, 2007 (issued @ 1500 hrs.)

07 FIRES

I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell. The weather forecast project a continuing of the high pressure systems through August and possible into September.

See http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf for Fire Behavior Predictions.

II. Current Incident Situation

Little Wolf, Ahorn, Novak Fires are being managed by Bennett's Type I team

- **Little Wolf Fire** in the Wolf Creek drainage, 547 acres, reduction in acreage due to more accurate mapping. Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated. Little Wolf is 90% contained and is threatening 20 structures. Personnel assigned: 168. Cause: Lightning
- **Ahorn Fire** on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is at 14,900 acres. 0% Containment. Personnel Assigned: 236. Structures threatened and evacuations in place. Cause: Lightning. The fire continues to move to the east out of the wilderness.
- **Novak**, in Lewis and Clark County in the Lewis and Clark National Forest, is at 1,750 acres. Novak is 0% contained and is threatening 24 structures. Personnel assigned: 81. The fire is causing traffic impacts on I-15. Cause: Lightning

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests in Lewis and Clark County is at 6,214 acres. Reinarz's Fire Use Management Team. Personnel assigned: 65. Cause: Lightning

Owl on Yellowstone NP and Gallatin NF. Wilder's IMT2. The Owl Fire is 303 acres, reduction in

acreage due to more accurate mapping. 0% contained. Wilder's Type 2 IMT will be transitioning into command today. The fire is threatening 13 structures. Personnel assigned: 10. Cause: Lightning.

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. 10 miles NE of Wisdom. 4,256 acres and 25% contained. Secrest's Type 2 team will be transitioning to a Type 3 Incident Organization. No structures threatened. Personnel assigned: 90. Cause: Lightning.

Rugby on the Lewis and Clark NF is 12 miles west of Neihart. 15 structures are threatened. 210 acres with 0% containment. Angell's T2 IMT. Personnel assigned: 91. Cause: Lightning

Walk In on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. 8 miles northwest of Ashland is 105 acres with 80% containment. Personnel assigned: 60. Cause: Lightning

Meriwether located in the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness is 2,100 acres. 0% containment. Personnel Assigned: 6. Cause: Lightning. Type 4 IC.

Conger Creek on the Lolo National Forest, 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is 350 acres with 0% containment. Structures are threatened. Personnel Assigned: 20. Cause: Lightning

NEW LARGE FIRES (Large fires are fires over 100 acres in size)

Garceau on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Grant's Type 2 IMT. 1,600 acres and 0% contained. Personnel assigned: 60. Cause: not reported. Timber and grass. Active fire behavior with short crown runs and long-range spotting. Structures threatened. Evacuations in progress

Skyland on the Flathead NF near Summit. LaFave's Type 2 IMT. Skyland is 420 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 100. Cause: not reported. Active fire behavior.

Black Coulee, six miles south of Malta on lands managed by Lewistown Field Office, BLM., MT. Type 3 IC. The Black Coulee fire is 13,000 acres and 0% contained. Personnel assigned: 13. Cause: not reported. Grass. Wind-driven fire behavior with rapid rate of spread. Structures threatened.

Sawmill Creek on the Lolo NF. The Sawmill Creek Fire is 100 acres with 0% containment. Personnel assigned: 11. Cause: not reported. Twenty-two miles southeast of Missoula, MT. Timber. Active fire behavior with torching. Structures threatened.

Harrington Mountain WFU, Bitterroot NF. Twenty-six miles southwest of Darby, MT. Timber and litter. Minimal fire behavior. Last report unless significant activity occurs.

Harrington Ridge WFU, Bitterroot NF. Twenty-six miles southwest of Hamilton, MT. Timber and litter. Minimal fire behavior. Last report unless significant activity occurs

The Eastern Montana Fire Zone (Miles City, MT) reported two large, lightning-caused fires that started in Custer County yesterday. The **Diamond Ring Fire** was reported at 300 acres, and the **Campbell Fire** at 800 acres.

III. Weather

A Red Flag Warning has been issued for Southeast Montana by the Billings NWS.

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning

A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours.

Weather Forecast

See the Daily Outlook: http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf.

IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

V. Local and Tribal Declarations

- **State of Emergency.** The following counties have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark	Ravalli
Lake	Granite
Cascade	Missoula
Beaverhead	Sanders

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following counties have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton	Gallatin
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VI. Local Government Emergency Operations

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- One Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk module is deployed for initial attack. The Blackhawk and its module are staged in Helena.
- One UH-60 Blackhawk and module has been ordered by NRCC for deployment in Missoula for Initial attack starting 7/26/07
- July 20, 2007 at 0700 the SECC was activated and staffed to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900) The MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.